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GREAT TRIUMPH SCIENCE OVER CREATION

PROF. DELAGE HAS ARTIFICIALLY PRODUCED A BEING THAT LIVES AND BREATHES AND WAVES WITHOUT THE AID OF ANY GOD.

ONLY DEFECT AT PRESENT IS LACK OF DIGESTIVE ORGANS AND FOOD ASSIMILATION—BELIEVED IT CAN BE PERFECTED AND EGG PRODUCTION BROUGHT ON.

A miracle that the old alchemists never contemplated in their wildest dreams has just been performed by Prof. Yves Delage. He has artificially produced life.

Prof. Delage has had photographed one of the sea-urchins which he obtained by artificial means, and he has also given a clear account of his experiments in the origin of the ideas which have germinated into this amazing result.

Prof. Delage, who is director of the governmental-biological station at Roscoff, on the coast of Finisterre, almost at the extreme northwest corner of France, first announced his amazing achievement in an address to the Academy of Sciences in Paris. The words with which he started the academicians were these:

"I have the pleasure of announcing that, after five years of effort, I have at last succeeded; I have obtained real sea-urchins, furnished with all the characteristic organs—spines, pedicles, ambulacra. I have actually four of them, of which three of them have climbed up the glass sides of the vessels in which they were developed, where they are maintaining themselves easily by means of their ambulacra, which proves they have finally abandoned the pelagic existence of the larvae. So it cannot be said that any essential thing is lacking in these beings, for whom the intervention of the male parent was replaced by a purely chemical process."

Like all great savants, Prof. Delage is oppressed by the thought of how little we know, in the face of nature, than elated by the triumph of his special discovery. In the whole field of biology he has worked for many years with the utmost assiduity; he has passed through the phase of accepting Darwinism as a final explanation to that of doubting certain of Darwin's theories in the light of the puzzles of the universe; thence to accepting Weissman's propositions, and again to finding Weissman's conclusions unsatisfactory. All learned volumes, and he has sought at every turn to apply the lessons he has learned in the biological world to the investigations of ethical ideas, the great problems of right and wrong conduct in human affairs. Yet the gray servant, as he reeled his head on his hand and remained absorbed in his thoughts for some moments, looked sad and disappointed.

"We search everywhere," he said, "but we are always baffled. Of the real nature of things we know nothing. We are lost in conjectures. It is enough to drive one mad."

He then took up his microscope, on the side of which was an object small but quite distinguishable to the naked eye, which under magnification had all the appearance of a sea-urchin. This was the preserved body of what had been one of the most extraordinary denizens of earth—the first living creature denizens of earth—the first living creature produced by the art of man!

Professor Delage explained the course of his experiments. The first idea on this line of discovery came from Prof. Leob of the University of Chicago, who observed that if the heart of an animal be placed in a solution of salt it continues to beat for many hours, although when plunged into sterilized water it very soon stops beating. It is a fact that it is true, but these experiments suggested many patient studies of the action of saline and other solutions on animal tissues.

They suggested to Prof. Leob and to Prof. Delage the idea of parthenogenesis, or reproduction without the union of the sexes, and toward this both men simultaneously directed their experiments. The result of Prof. Leob's researches was told four or five years ago. He succeeded, or said he had succeeded,

in obtaining the larvae of sea-urchins from eggs which he had fertilized artificially.

The first stage in the development of many of the lower animals, tadpoles might be called the larvae of the frog or newt, as the grub is called the larva of the fly or beetle. These larvae of Prof. Leob failed to progress beyond the most primitive stage and developed into anything that resembled a real sea-urchin. Prof. Leob came to the conclusion that any further progress was virtually impossible. Prof. Delage, who had been experimenting along the same lines, noticed among the artificially hatched larvae a few which showed a tendency to transform themselves into adults. He was sure that he was on the right track, and he has been pursuing his investigation at Roscoff ever since the first announcement several years ago.

At his laboratory he has the assistance of some intelligent and enthusiastic assistants, among whom is Mlle. Desjardins-Beaumetz, daughter of the Minister of Fine Arts. The place is ideally equipped for such study.

Sea-urchins are to be found on almost every coast. There are several species, but all have the same general characteristics. The sea-urchin looks like a hedgehog rolled up. It has a shell almost globular, but slightly flattened underneath, and this is covered with a mass of movable spines, some short, some long, and others having only a few dozen, longer, thicker and rounder. Some of the sea-urchins are about the size of a man's fist; others are no bigger than a hazel nut. If they are observed under water it will be seen that among their spines is a mass of slender, gelatinous tentacles, each ending in a tiny sucker. These tentacles are drawn in or obtruded, and vary in length according to the use to which their owner is putting them.

In the center of the under side is a mouth armed with five sharp teeth, and closer observation will reveal that the whole anatomy of the creature is pentagonal, the spines being set in five bands, and the tentacles, or pedicles, arranged in five similar bands. The ambulacra of which Prof. Delage speaks are the five bands through which these feeble appendages are produced.

The sea-urchins are relatively high in the animal scale, higher than the worms and little below the insects; they are first cousins of the star-fish and sea-cucumbers. They have a nervous system, a well-developed alimentary canal, and an elaborate frame-work of bone to which the muscles that work their teeth are attached.

Prof. Delage formed a theory, which he decided to put to a test, that the processes which take place in the development of an egg after fertilization are nothing but a series of coagulations and liquefactions of the colloidal substance of the egg. But to produce artificially this series of coagulations and liquefactions in the order required and at the appropriate times seemed to be beyond possibility of accomplishment. Further study, however, convinced Prof. Delage that the first step was the essential. For millions of generations eggs have passing through the necessary process, and so their constitution has become prepared and adapted to these conditions.

The shock of the first step—or fertilization—acts like turning a key in a complex machine, which then proceeds in regular movements without external stimulation. Prof. Delage, therefore, in order to obtain the first step, plunged the eggs into sea water, to which he added an acid to produce coagulation and a base to produce solution. Years of experimentation gave no very promising results, although he felt that he was getting to understand better the nature of the problem. Some months ago the professor used tannic acid for the purposes both of coagulation and liquefaction. This was extraordinary successful, for, while during five years at his laboratory at Roscoff he had obtained only a few sea-urchins, yet since the month of June he has produced thousands.

The great majority of these larvae die or disappear, so that up to the present he has been able to rear only four sea-urchins to adult form. The difficulties of keeping them alive to this stage are almost insurmountable; but this is not a peculiarity of the artificially produced sea-urchins, for Prof. Delage

found it even more difficult to rear those produced in the usual way. In the sea, every shore hundreds of millions of such eggs are hatched, but the number of sea-urchins is relatively very small. Of the four reared to the fully formed or adult stage one died, and it was this one that Prof. Delage photographed and studied in detail. One peculiarity of this dead sea-urchin is that, whereas all other sea-urchins are built on pentagonal or five-sided principles, this is built on hexagonal or six-sided lines. In this respect it is unique.

In reference to objections that might be made that these eggs were really fertilized naturally, Prof. Delage described the minute precautions taken to avoid such an event, and also the details of the physiological process by which it could be determined that such natural fertilization was out of the question.

When Prof. Delage's art had triumphed over Nature, and his four artificially hatched sea-urchins were actually crawling about the sides of the aquarium, there was a shock in store for the indefatigable investigator. When he came to examine the precious babies under a magnifying glass they looked perfect; there were their mouths armed with five-pointed teeth that are familiar to every hunter of the sea-shore; but the sea-urchins had no appetite; never was he able to detect them in the act of eating any thing. They pushed their sucker like legs and feet out through the tiny hole in their ambulacral plates; they moved their spine in the orthodox way, and by combining these motions they crawled up and down the glass walls of their home—but they never ate! Behind those teeth there should have been a stomach and a wavy intestine, but these juvenile sea-urchins made no use of these organs. Prof. Delage was reluctantly forced to the conclusion that his pets had no digestive organs at all.

So the victory of art over Nature was rather a hollow triumph after all. But Prof. Delage was not de-paired. The remaining three of his interesting little flock are still alive and "doing as well as can be expected under the circumstances." He is continuing his experiments, confident that he is on the right track and that he will soon discover why artificially sea-urchins have no stomachs and how to rectify the defect.

This accomplished, the whole scientific world will wait with bated breath to learn whether the artificial sea-urchins can reproduce their kind by the ordinary method.

ABOUT HUMANITY.

Individuals die, but that much of truth which they have revealed, that much of good which they have done, is not lost with them; Humanity treasures it up and the men who walk over their graves reap the benefit of it. Every one of us is born to-day in an atmosphere of ideas and of beliefs elaborated by the whole of bygone Humanity, and each of us brings, even without knowing it, a more or less important element to the life of Humanity to come. The education of Humanity progresses as these pyramids in the East rise, to which every passer-by adds a stone.—Mazzini.

FIRST CAUSES.

Fundamentally, the hypothesis of a first cause enunciated by theists, agnostics or materialists is in its essence identical. Thus, the orthodox usually postulate a spirit as the origin of things; but, by constituting it, in effect, they are merely clothing a phantom of their own imagination with eternal properties, and asserting the existence of an unremovable something which never existed. Agnostics, similarly, style their word-begotten Deity—"the Unknowable Energy"—an unknowable something which never existed, and "from which everything proceeds." Finally, materialists also postulate their first cause—matter-in-motion—an unmakeable something, which never existed. Hence, all three hypotheses are equally valid as assertions or assumptions. But the materialists claims this striking advantage over its opponents, he demonstrates by actual experiment what that elementary matter is, and what its forces are, which form the constituents of his eternal something, while the orthodox and the agnostics detail nothing and prove nothing, but begin their systems with assumption, expound them by aberration, and satisfy them by reiteration.

—A. Redcote Dewar.

GONE UPON A LONG VOYAGE

Gerald Massey, One of England's Free-thought Poets, Writers and Philosophers is no more.

SPLENDID TRIBUTE FROM A FRIEND.

(By G. W. Foote.)

Who has not heard or read of Gerald Massey?

Who has failed to feel a just thrill of pride in the freedom of his verse and the charm of his prose?

From England the news comes of his death at a ripe old age when it is really a joy to retire peacefully from life's tumults and tragedies. Year by year his voice will be heard ringing from the "eternal silence" and men will listen with rapt attention to this music from the spheres.

The editor of the Blade knew not Mr. Massey. He only knew of him. That full justice may be done to deserving worth we produce the following from the pen of G. W. Foote which appeared in the London Free-thinker:—

Gerald Massey, poet and ethnologist, who died on Monday, October 28, was referred to in the usual way by the newspapers. Everything was said about him except what really signifies. The fact that he had spent nearly a half of his long life of eighty years in laboriously demonstrating the mythical nature of Christianity was carefully concealed. I did not perceive an allusion to it in Mr. A. E. Fletcher's long article in the Daily Chronicle. Naturally there was no reference anywhere to the awful fact that Massey had lectured widely on such subjects as "The Historical Jesus and the Mythical Christ" and "Why Don't God Kill the Devil?"

Even to mention such subjects would be a deadly sin in "respectable" newspapers. They all recorded the fact that he was a believer in a future life. That was a point, of course, which placed his genius in contact with their mediocrity. Besides it is so "proper" to believe in a future life. Some intellectual people believe in it—and all the fools, of course find this association very comforting. The one thing that secures Mrs. Besant's "respectability," now that she has broken away from the "crass materialism" of her best days. That is the great thing. Every little nincompoop (and oh the multitude of them!) likes to believe that his wonderful individuality will be preserved for ever and ever. The rest doesn't matter. The details don't count. Heaven or no heaven, hell or no hell, purgatory or no purgatory, continuous life or intermittent life, conscious life or unconscious life—all that is of no importance as long as you only say "I believe in the world to come." Any world will do.

Gerald Massey was a poet and a true one, but I do not think he was at all a great poet. I say this in spite of the generous and enthusiastic eulogy of Landor, whose noble nature led him to give royal praise to some second-rate contemporaries as well as to the loftiest. I believe that the instinct of Massey's maturity, which led him to turn away from verse-writing and devote himself to a scholarly and philosophic exposure of the greatest religious fraud of all ages, was a perfect sound one. Other people discuss a man's capacity and character; the man himself inevitably obeys the law of his own nature.

I assert, then, that the one great significant fact about Gerald Massey was that he was pronounced, an ardent, and a zealous Free-thinker. Twenty-five years ago, when I was enjoying the sweets of Christian charity in Holloway Gaol, for the crime (which will some day be reckoned my virtue) of "bringing the Holy Scripture and the Christian Religion into disbelief and contempt," I should have received from Massey, who was then on a visit to England from America but he was churchily refused a visiting order from the Home Office. He sent me, however, his two magnificent volumes on the Natural Genesis, which I still have and prize; and to the interim editor of the Free-thinker (Dr. Aveling) he sent a note in which he said to me—"I fight the same battle as myself, although with a somewhat different weapon."

Massey fought the same battle as I. That is the important point. Why quarrel about the weapon? He didn't. He recognized a fellow soldier in the same holy war. Whether you fire a six-hundred-pound shot from a big gun, or work a maxim, or wield a long-range rifle, or charge home with the glint of

cold steel and the thrust of the deadly bayonet, you are doing your part to disable and defeat the enemy. Your position in the great Army of Human Liberation shall be as it may be. That is a mere social accident. Whatever your part is, play it well; stand to your post, keep your eye on the foe, strike home at the right moment; and whether you are the general with the brooding brow, or the common soldier with strong arms and stout heart, you shall have your share of the victory.

I have not yet seen Massey's last two volumes, completing his long comment on the text "Out of Egypt have I called my son." Sometimes a text is false in one sense, and true in another. The Jews never were in Egypt, but Christ was. The holy mother and child—the one a virgin, the other a god—were worshipped in Egypt millenniums before the Christian era. The mythic Christ came out of Egypt. It was there that all the dogmas of early Christianity, and all its myths and legends were manufactured; for, until the Mohammedan wave of conquest swept Christianity out of North Africa, it was not Rome, nor even Constantinople, that was the most important Christian centre, but Alexandria, where the East and West met, where Greek science and philosophy and Oriental superstition and mysticism faced each other for a death-grapple, where Hypatia was murdered and the great Museum destroyed, and where Christianity was at last established on the ruins of "the grandeur that was Greece," leaving for another famous city, farther west in the Mediterranean, its establishments on the ruins of "the glory that was Rome."

Among the quotations on the back of the title-page of The Natural Genesis, published in 1883, Massey included this one from the Atheist who was called "The Devil's Chaplain" and was twice imprisoned for "blasphemy"—for one year in 1828, and for two years in 1831: "Bind it about thy neck, and write it upon the tablet of thy heart, 'Everything of Christianity is of Egyptian origin.'"—Rev. Robert Taylor, Oakham Gaol, 1829.

Here is another striking and pregnant passage from the close of Massey's "Explanatory Preface":

"The writer has not only shown that the current theology is, but also how it has been, falsely founded on a misinterpretation of mythology by unconsciously inheriting the leavings of primitive or archaic man and ignorantly mistaking these for divine revelations. The work culminates in tracing the transformation of astronomical mythology into the system of Equinoctial Christology called Christianity, and demonstrating the non-historic myths in which the Messianic mystery, the Virgin motherhood, the incarnation and birth, the miraculous life and character, the crucifixion and resurrection, of the Savior Son who was the Word of all Ages, were altogether allegorical."

This was a clean sweep of the New Testament history. It was putting Christianity into a sweating-bath of Egyptian mythology, in which it was utterly dissolved. No wonder the newspaper obituaries of Gerald Massey are silent in this direction.

As soon as I can find time I will read and deal with the last instalment of Gerald Massey's real life-work. Meanwhile, I cannot help noting the fact that he labored at these two big volumes with all his remaining strength, seeing them through the press by a great effort (in more ways than one), and dying only a few weeks after he had placed them securely before the world.

How stern and grand is such life-work in comparison with the easy task of those who take a few points of Free-thought criticism that have obviously triumphed, and put them forward with the air of discoverers as the New Theology—without the loss of a single penny, and with a great gain in notoriety and applause. Gerald Massey was not a camp-follower, he was a pioneer. He looked for other rewards than those which the mob of the hour can bestow. I have been struck once more at the noble pathos of his "Dedictory" verses to the great work he sent me in Holloway Gaol. They moved me to tears then; I can scarcely withhold them now. The poet-scholar feels his isolation while accomplishing his self-imposed task. He compares himself to a diver whose friends watch anxiously for his return:—

"Year after year went by,
And watchers wondered when
The diver to their welcoming cry
Of joy, would rise again.

And still rolled on Time's wave,
That whitened as it passed:

(Continued from First Page.)

CHRIST AND HIS WHISKERETTES

Did He Wear a Wig or Real Whiskers? Could He Have Saved Without First Being Shaved? What was The Racial Contour of His Proboscis?

(By John F. Clarke.)

If there is any fun to be had at the expense of Christians, the undersigned is the boy to grasp the fun. Just now, grave and revered seignors and daughters are "with standing each other to the face" about Jesus Christ's whiskers. One sanctified painter has hunted up ninety reliefs, made prior to the fourth century, and searched the Scriptures for evidence that Christ was beardless and wore his hair short.

Now, this can not be treated as a "non-essential." If we were redeemed by Christ, the fact of whiskers and long hair cuts a great figure. It seems that for four centuries the world believed that it had escaped Hell-fire through the personal sacrifice of a beardless and sand-papered youth.

The whiskers and long hair were put on the Savior by a new school of Italian daubsters to give venerableness to the myth. A lie must be venerable to be 24 karats fine. The way the whiskers butted in was like this: a painter of Jesus found that his wares were stale and he had an order for a portrait of a Ducal Dude, who had nice curly locks like we see on the Jack of Spades and he had lovely Vandyke lilacs on his face. Everybody was entranced at his picture and looked down upon the face of the smooth Savior. The artist snatched the painted wig and whiskers from the spot and flung them at the Christ and they stuck and made such a pretty Savior that the artist fell down and worshipped the work on his easel. What was the astonishment of the artist when the Christ spoke from the canvas and said: "Ods bodkins! I was but half created and lo and behold! Thou hast perfected me. I really flatter myself in this wig."

The success of this enterprise made a sudden change in the conception of The Redeemer of the World. This leads us to the conclusion that Christ might really have saved somebody, perhaps himself, if he had only had whiskers at the critical crisis of His Christly caty-casy. Pontius Pilate might have claimed him for his long-lost brother and have told the rabble not to butt in to family affairs if he had only let his wig and beard grow. Whiskers were a sign of opulence in Christ's days, and the great wealth of hirsute adornment the higher the standing. In fact some grew beards so long that they had to stand high so as not to tread on them. It was not the coat that made the man in the day, but the luxuriance of the whiskers. The doctors who dared hint at microbes nesting within the flowing wave-locks would have been ostracised.

Whiskers built their nests in the ground in those good old days and did not plague whisker kissers. Science in searching out the microbes, has done the male half of humanity a dirty Irish trick. The la-see of Robert Burris line had no trivial excuses against kissing. Now-a-days when the be-whiskered divines kiss the dames and damsels, the linking microbes give them away. The ladies catch something and lay it all to the mischief: microbe of the labial embesmeence—the redness of the breath. The preachers drink cochineal teas and their breath heightens the color of the ladies' faces. The wearing of sacred whiskers by the called-of-God, does not mitigate the sins of visitation. Science should invent whiskers with spring-roller attachment so that they can be treated with campher balls and prayer.

"Whiskers is whiskers and Saviors is Saviors" but one without the other is useless. For instance a ton of whiskers would not make a Savior of me or a Jesus either. Wall Street needs a mighty Savior, just now one with whiskers a yard wide and all wool and enough curled hair to make a hotel mattress. Next important question will be: "Did Christ wear his nose Roman of Hebraic in contour?"

All can guess at this. Perhaps some of the Blade readers and writers can give points to the Christ painter of historic and universal interest. The style of hair-cut in Palestine in Herod's time was to stand a man against a tree and throw oyster shells at him until the hair was reduced to proper length.

John F. Clarke.

Dean of Antiquarian Research Club.